

nationally inclusive constitution, that is conducting what looks like a show trial, borrowing noxious elements of Baathist law to speed the way toward an early and politically popular execution.

THE OCCUPIERS' TRIAL

(By Pepe Escobar)

Occupied Iraq has virtually no security, electricity, water or jobs. Last Saturday, instead of basic necessities for a decent life, Iraqis had a referendum—already suspected of massive fraud—on a constitution few have even seen.

Starting on Wednesday, Iraqis, and the rest of the world for that matter, get a running soap opera—the trial of Saddam Hussein, under whose regime, for all its terror, and then 12 years of economic sanctions, Iraqis at least had security, electricity, water and jobs.

This “trial of the century”—or at least the early 21st century—starts at a secret Green Zone location, by an anonymous court, and under extreme, U.S. military-imposed security measures. It's a made in U.S.A. affair—in administrative and financial terms.

The court, the training and the whole proceedings cost U.S. \$75 million—courtesy of U.S. taxpayers (the budget was allocated in May 2004). About 300 people—paid by the Americans—work on the trial machinery. The five “secret” Iraqi judges—Shi'ites and Kurds, no Sunnis—are paid by the Americans, live inside the Green Zone and are protected by the Americans from, being kidnapped or killed.

They have received special training from U.S., British and Australian legal experts and have even staged a mock trial in London. They are supposed to be “independent” in a country on which “the United States continues to wield vast influence”, according to the understated Associated Press. Human Rights Watch has warned on the record that the trial may be “violating international standards for fair trials”.

The initial charges against Saddam will focus on the killing of 143 Shi'ites in the village Dujail, north of Baghdad, in 1982, after an assassination attempt against him. Recently disclosed images from Iraqi TV at the time show Saddam touring Dujail in triumph—but not the hostility of the crowd.

The assassination attempt was claimed by the Shi'ite Da'wa Party. Current Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari happens to be a leader of the Da'wa Party. As far as he's concerned, Saddam should be pronounced guilty in no time. “We are not trying to land on the moon here . . . It's enough [to try Saddam] on Dujail and Anfal. The tribunal is just and open, he has a defense lawyer and the verdict will match the crime . . . I don't want to intervene in judicial proceedings, but why do we say now that more time is needed?”

Six other people are being tried alongside Saddam. They include his half-brother Barzan al-Tikriti—who was the head of the terror-inflicting Mukhabarat intelligence services; his notorious henchman Taha Yassin Ramadan; Awad Hamed al-Bander, the judge who sentenced many in Dujail to death; and four Ba'ath Party officials. The prosecution charges that Saddam himself, as head of state, certified the executions pronounced by an Iraqi special tribunal presided by Bander.

This won't be an American-style courtroom drama. There's no jury. The chief judge will question a number of witnesses. Many have already been interviewed before the trial. The five judges decide whether Saddam and his six co-defendants are innocent or guilty. Saddam will have the right to call witnesses.

If he is convicted, his defense team will be able to file a number of appeals before the

sentence—expected to be death—is applied. If it's death row, Saddam must be executed—in fact hanged—within 30 days of the ruling on his last appeal. The description of the trial procedures is provided, once again, not by Iraqis, but by Americans—at the National Security Council and the State Department.

This special Iraqi tribunal was instituted by former American proconsul Paul Bremer in December 2003—curiously only three days before Saddam, according to the official Pentagon version, was captured in his hole on the ground. The tribunal is supposed to judge crimes committed by Iraqis—inside and outside the country—between July 17, 1968 (when the Ba'ath Party took power) and May 1, 2003, as well as war crimes perpetrated during the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) and the invasion of Kuwait (1990–1991).

So a string of trials may be in the offing—concerning, for starters, the Anfal campaign of 1987–1988 which killed at least 5,000 Kurds, the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the suppression of the Shi'ite uprising of 1991 (which may have killed 200,000 people) and the widespread assassination of Shi'ite religious leaders, like the Grand Ayatollah Baqr al-Sadr.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MARCHANT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MARCHANT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 1700

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO COAST GUARD IN EFFORTS DURING HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary efforts of our Coast Guard in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Coast Guard again demonstrated just how well they live up to their Latin motto, which means: “Always Ready.”

Several days before Katrina made landfall, the Coast Guard activated emergency response plans, while maintaining communications with both the Atlantic and Pacific commands and headquarters in Washington. As the disaster drew near, if something did

not work, the Coast Guard modified its plans to meet the needs.

The first images we as Americans saw on television depicting this disaster were those of Coast Guard helicopters rescuing stranded citizens from rooftops amid rising flood waters. In the face of high winds and flying debris, daytime temperatures nearing 100 degrees and downed utility lines, our brave men and women heeded the call of duty to perform selfless acts of courage.

During around-the-clock flight operations over a 7-day period, our Coast Guard helicopters operating over New Orleans saved an astonishing 6,470 lives. They also helped to save thousands of other victims by delivering tons of food and water to those who could not be evacuated immediately. In all, the Coast Guard rescued 33,500 people in its response to Katrina, six times the number of people it rescued in all of 2004.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud of the Coast Guard air crew rescue swimmers, many of whom trained at the Coast Guard Aquatic Training Facility, located in my congressional district at the Coast Guard station in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. The Coast Guard rescue swimmers faced some very adverse conditions, including flooded houses and buildings, steep slippery roofs, foul and contaminated water, and the need to hack through attics with axes or break out windows to free the survivors. Despite these obstacles, these brave men and women saved many American lives.

The Coast Guard's responses to Katrina and Rita should serve as a model for our governmental agencies and our first responders in the face of future disasters. These brave men and women succeeded in keeping these devastating events from becoming even greater tragedies. I thank the Coast Guard for their dedicated service, and I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating them and supporting my future efforts to upgrade their training facility in my congressional district.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STUPAK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RYAN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.